

Minutes of Meeting
State Soil Conservation Board
Taylor Center for Natural History
Strawtown, Indiana
9:00 a.m., September 21, 2004

Present:

Craig A. Beyrouty
Paul J. Ehret
Peter A. Hippensteel

Absent:

David L. Avery
Karen L. Dehne
O. William Mann
Travis E. Nolcox
Garry Tom, Sr.
Ryan K. West

Others present:

Ronald J. Boehm
Dorothy A. Corns
Dean Farr
Doug Hovermale
Bill James
Robert K. Johnson
James E. Lake
J. Mark McCauley
Harry S. Nikides
Douglas B. Nusbaum
Al Patterson
Gale Peas

James K. Ray
Cecil F. Rich
David Russell
Linda Schmidt
Mike Seeman
DeeDee Sigler
John B. South
Kent D. Tracey
Douglas Walker
W. Gene Weaver
Vic Wenning
Julia B. Wickard

Chairman Peter Hippensteel called the meeting to order at 9:17 a.m. Due to lack of quorum, no votes would be taken during the meeting.

Park supervisor Al Patterson welcomed State Board members and guests to the Taylor Center for Natural History. A grand opening and tour of the park and archeological site were held on September 18, with about 500 visitors participating. Patterson discussed history of the park land and plans for future development of the 750-acre prairie site. The active dig has revealed artifacts from about 1100-1400 AD.

Minutes

Chairman Hippensteel called for comments on the draft minutes for the August 10, 2004, State Board meeting. Approval of the minutes was deferred until the next scheduled meeting.

Clean Water Indiana

Division assistant director for SWCD support Jim Lake advised that districts are currently providing final accomplishment reports of their CWI projects. It is anticipated that the statewide report will be available by early November for presentation to the Legislative Services Agency. In response to a question by State Association vice-president Gene Weaver, Lake advised that about \$9,000 has been returned from districts for incomplete projects. Several districts are currently finalizing activities to meet the September 30 completion deadline.

Soil and Water Quality Programs

SWCD Support: Jim Lake reported that interviews have been scheduled for selection of a conservation program specialist. Along with Kim Wininger, Ken Eck, and Ben Carter, the new CPS will provide district assistance for about one-fourth of the counties. Recent CPS activities include continued assistance to districts with development of business plans.

Lake and River Enhancement:

Agriculture conservation specialist Ron Boehm presented staff recommendations for revisions to the current livestock fencing and watering facility practices. Changes in the fencing practice include adding cost-share eligibility for perimeter fencing and stream crossing and revised language in the producer's grazing management plan. Changes in the watering facility practice provide for cost-share eligibility for non-traditional watering systems, such as solar, wind, or nose pumps. Clarification was requested concerning electrical connections. Because changes in funding eligibility policy require a vote, action was deferred until the next State Board meeting. Boehm will prepare further revisions for the watering system recommendation and may be contacted for additional information or comment concerning the two practices.

Agriculture conservation specialist Kent Tracey presented the engineering feasibility study completion report for Cedar Lake (Lake County). Consultant recommendations identified five potential sites for design and construction of practices to improve lake water quality. Total project cost was \$40,000, with LARE contributing \$36,000. A balance of \$5,400 remains to be paid. Staff recommends acceptance of the completion report and final payment to the Cedar Lake Enhancement Association. Action was deferred until the State Board's next meeting.

Tracey presented the consultant selections for Big Turkey Lake sediment trap construction (Steuben), Lake Gage and Lime Lake engineering feasibility study (Steuben), and Pettit Mill Pond sediment trap construction (LaGrange). Tracey described the projects, selection process, and costs, and identified the recommended consulting firms. Action was deferred on the three projects until the next State Board meeting.

Stormwater & Sediment Control:

Division director Harry Nikides reported that Division and Indiana Department of Environmental Management staff have been reviewing construction ordinances. The stormdrain marking video, developed through a US-EPA Section 319 grant, is nearing completion. Stormwater and sediment control chief Randy Braun, with other DNR and IDEM staff, has recently been involved in meetings concerning Rule 5 permitting expectations at the French Lick Trump casino construction site.

District Issues/Updates:

Pete Hippensteel distributed copies of an information page prepared in response to a question presented by Gene Weaver regarding nepotism in SWCDs. The information page cites the Indiana Code 4-15-7 prohibition on nepotism and recommends addressing specific questions to the State Ethics Commission. The question and reference may be found on the Division of Soil Conservation's website for SWCD frequently asked questions.

Hippensteel distributed copies of a letter being sent to SWCDs regarding dual office holding. Copies of the attorney general's dual office holding guidance document and the letter have been provided in response to a question presented by an SWCD supervisor at a meeting held in March 2004. All district supervisors need to be aware of laws regarding public service positions. Questions should be directed to the attorney general's office by telephone, fax, or email, as noted in the letter. As an additional reference, the *County Bulletin*, published by the State Board of Accounts, has included lists of local, state, and federal positions that have already been questioned regarding applicability of the law.

Recommendations for supervisor appointment are due by November 1. Supervisor election and appointment forms will now include a checkbox for acknowledgement that dual office holding information has been provided to the individual. Supervisor recruitment materials were sent to districts in August.

Chairman's Report

Pete Hippensteel reported that the Indiana Lakes Management Work Group conducted three meetings over recent months. Findings and recommendations were presented to the Natural Resources Study Committee at its September 14 meeting at Culver.

Hippensteel called attention to recent initiatives by the Hamilton City Council to encourage adoption of ordinances restricting shoreline development around Hamilton Lake in Steuben County as examples of good planning.

Hippensteel complimented Robert Johnson, editor of *Indiana Environment & Nature*, on the timely and informative topics in his weekly newsletter. Hippensteel also complimented DeeDee Sigler, IASWCD watershed information specialist, on recent newsletters for the Association.

Division of Soil Conservation Director's Report

Harry Nikides remarked on the record attendance and success of the Indiana State Fair and the Pathway to Water Quality. Nikides also reported that Division staff will begin interviewing candidates for regional supervisor and conservation program specialist positions later in the week; candidates for the Project WET coordinator and environmental engineer positions will be interviewed during the week of September 27.

Nikides advised that he attended the National Association of State Conservation Agencies' conference at Grand Rapids, Michigan, on September 13-16. The annual meeting is an excellent opportunity for sharing program ideas with counterparts from other states. Subjects of special interest at the conference included a golf course stewardship program initiated in Michigan, use of the state revolving fund for EQIP match in West Virginia, and the analysis of 2002 Farm Bill accomplishments.

IDEM Report

Watershed management section chief Linda Schmidt noted that Indiana's state revolving fund is available for nonpoint source pollution projects; a recent agreement was established with the Evansville wastewater treatment plant for clean up of a brownfields area. Interested parties may contact Amy Henninger or MaryLou Renshaw at IDEM for further information.

Grant applications for 2005 U.S.-EPA Section 319 grants will be accepted through October 1. Priority will be given for projects focusing on watershed management planning, particularly for 303(d) impaired waters and TMDL sites.

State Association President's Report

Executive director Dean Farr reported on recent State Association activities, including attendance at meetings to promote Clean Water Indiana funding, Ohio River Basin watershed study, and 2005 Farm Bill funding. The Association is promoting efforts to expand SWCD supervisor recruitment and USDA CRP signups. Farr noted dates of upcoming Association meetings.

NRCS State Conservationist's Report

Harry Nikides distributed copies of materials provided by assistant state conservationist Dwayne Howard, outlining the current status of conservation program funding allocations.

Farm Bureau Department of Agriculture Report

Agriculture and natural resources director Julia Wickard presented the Indiana Farm Bureau report regarding establishment of an Indiana Department of Agriculture. Wickard stated that the delegate body recommended development of the concept at its 2002 annual meeting. IFB president Don Villwock appointed a 12-member task force to research a proposal, which was formally adopted on August 28, 2004. Wickard discussed development of the plan, Indiana agricultural and economic statistics supporting the need, and potential organizational functioning of the department. Wickard noted that both gubernatorial candidates have offered support for the concept and that legislation is currently being drafted. Indiana Farm Bureau staff may be contacted for further information.

Public Comment

Farm Services Agency program specialist Doug Hovermale noted that FSA is promoting a more active role in the conservation partnership. Hovermale advised that Indiana FSA will encourage quail habitat practices in the continuous CRP sign up programs after October 1.

Next Meeting

The next State Soil Conservation Board meeting will be Tuesday, November 9, 2004, at Indianapolis.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:00 a.m.

Minutes recorded by Dorothy Corns

Approved December 14, 2004;

Deleted: November 9, 2004:

